

Northampton Mercury

THURSDAY, APRIL 9, 2015

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COBBLERS PAYING THE PRICE OF A POOR START

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SPORTS STARS LINE UP FOR BARWELL CHARITY MATCH

COUNTY CELEBRITIES READY TO KICK-OFF THIS SUNDAY AT SIXFIELDS

Rugby World Cup winners Ben Cohen, Jason Robinson and Mike Catt will line up alongside a host of Northamptonshire sporting legends at Sixfields this Sunday for the inaugural Leon Barwell Foundation Trophy.

The trio, who helped England lift the World Cup in October 2003, will join fellow world cup winner Matt Dawson in the squads for the game, which will kick-off at the home of the Cobblers at 3pm.

Former Saints and four-times British and Irish Lions head coach Sir Ian McGeechan will also be there, having agreed to be manager of one of the sides, in a move that will see him face ex-Cobblers boss Ian Atkins.

A host of other sporting icons have pledged their support to the Foundation by playing in the charity game, including Tim Rodber – the

former Saints captain who guided the club to their historic Heineken Cup rugby triumph in 2000.

Ex-Northampton Town footballers Chris Willmott, Craig Hinton, Ian Sampson and Kevin Wilson will also return to Sixfields, while former Northants cricketers Allan Lamb, Mal Lloye and Jeremy Snape will feature too.

It is hoped the game will raise thousands for the Foundation, which has been set up by the Barwell family in memory of former Saints chairman Leon Barwell, who died following a battle with cancer in June 2013, aged 46.

Tickets for the game will be available on matchday or in advance from the Cobblers and Saints ticket offices, the Royal & Derngate box office, and online at www.ntfc.co.uk. Tickets are £10 for adults and £4 for concessions, with children aged seven and under admitted free of charge.



Allan Lamb (centre) and Ben Cohen will be donning their football boots for a fund-raising game in memory of Leon Barwell (left)

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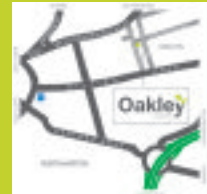
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Matthew Harris, from Brixworth, contracted hepatitis after receiving infected NHS blood in the 1970s or 1980s

'Infected NHS blood killed five of my family'

A man from Northampton who caught hepatitis from infected NHS blood and has lost five cousins to the medical disaster, is calling for more medical help for survivors.

Matthew Harris, from Brixworth, is a haemophiliac who has needed regular blood transfusions all his life.

At some point in the 1970s or 1980s, he and six cousins, who were also born with the condition, all received infected blood from the NHS.

All of them caught chronic life-threatening illnesses, with five cousins dying in their teens or twenties.

One cousin is now gravely ill with a long-term blood-borne disease and Mr Harris himself has battled the hepatitis he contracted through a transfusion for more than 30 years, massively altering his prospects in life.

He said: "I can't believe this was allowed to happen and kept hidden."

"But most of all I can't believe there has been no adequate compensation for those who have died and whose lives

are still affected every day.

"This scandal has torn my family apart and to this day there is no proper acknowledgement of that."

A report on the NHS blood scandal as it related to Scotland was published last week, to the anger of victims and their families who said it did not place blame on specific people or bodies.

Some money has been offered and Prime Minister

David Cameron apologised on behalf of the Government.

Mr Harris, now aged 43, said he wants access to the most up-to-date medicines.

He said: "Nobody knows who will be in Government in May but I want them to finally say we will get what we deserve."

"I can't get the newest drugs because only the most ill with cirrhosis are entitled. I'd like the Government to

pledge to invest to make that happen."

Mr Harris said he also wanted enough money to look after his family if the worst happens.

"Because of my condition, I can't get life insurance so, as things stand, my wife gets nothing when I die."

"The least the Government can offer after what has happened to my relatives is some financial security."

PM said blood sourcing from drug addicts 'shouldn't have happened'

■ David Cameron last week apologised to victims of the NHS blood tragedy, following a Scottish report into the issue, saying it was something that "should not have happened".

■ Between 1970 and 1991, contaminated NHS blood products caused an estimated 32,700 people to be infected

with hepatitis C.

■ From 1978 to 1985, 1,500 people were infected with the HIV virus in a similar way, most of whom were also infected with hepatitis C.

■ The infections came from Factor VIII, a clotting agent developed in the 1970s to be used in blood products for haemophiliacs.

■ Britain imported un-screened blood products as it did not have enough 'home-grown' Factor VIII. However the US companies the NHS sourced used blood from, used donors including drug addicts and homeless people infected with hepatitis C and HIV, who had been paid cash.

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Police try to trace

Pictures have been released of nine men Northamptonshire Police would like to speak to in relation to six assaults and two robberies in Northampton during the past six months.

The CCTV images show men officers would like to talk to in connection with a series of assaults at businesses in Northampton, including one in a McDonald's restaurant and another in an adult entertainment store.

The first man police would like to trace is in connection with an assault outside Borjia in Castilian Street, Northampton, at about 11pm on September 21, 2014.

Officers would also like to talk to a man in relation to an assault in McDonald's restaurant, at Sixfields, at 5.30pm on December 28, 2014, and a man in connection to an assault at Simply Pleasure, in Wellingborough Road, Northampton, at about 6.30pm on February 3, 2015.

Other men pictured who are being asked to contact police include one in relation to an assault in St Edmunds

Road, Northampton, at 11am on February 6, 2015, and an assault in Jeyes Jetty, off The Drapery in Northampton town centre, at about 4am on January 22, 2015.

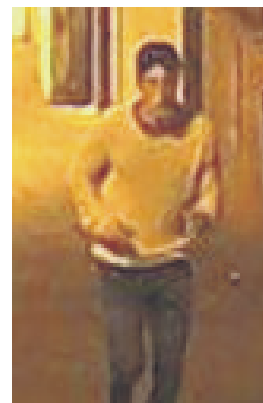
Another man is also being asked to call police to give information about an assault in the car park in Lady's Lane, Northampton, at about 11.30pm on December 11, 2014.

Northamptonshire Police are also trying to trace two men in connection with two robberies in Northampton.

The first was in Pilgrims Place, Far Cotton, at about 7.45pm on November 26, 2014 and the second was in Mill Lane, Kingsthorpe, Northampton at about 7.30pm on February 3, 2015.

Officers would also like to speak to a man pictured about an assault at The Chequered Flag pub in Causeway Road, Corby, at about 9.45pm on January 17, 2015.

Anyone who recognises any of these men or has any information, is asked to call police on 101. Alternatively, they can call Crimestoppers anonymously on 0800 555111.

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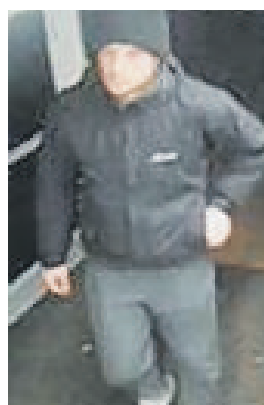
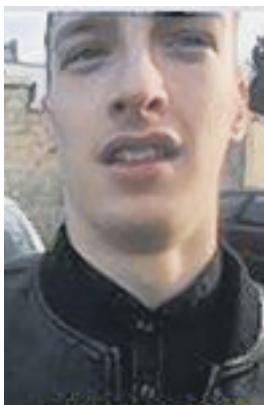
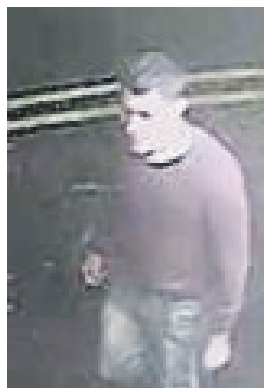
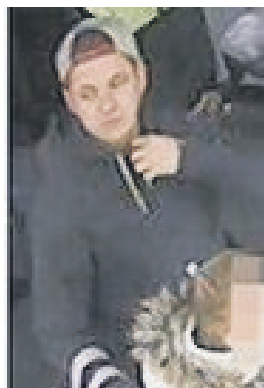
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Cold Ashby Golf Club is the first in Northamptonshire to share its facilities as a Footgolf course

Hybrid game suits footballers to a tee

The first Footgolf course in Northamptonshire has kicked off with the help of a former Premiership football referee.

Cold Ashby Golf Club has constructed the first course for the hybrid game, which is now open to the public.

It will see players take on the least-used of the complex's three sets of nine holes.

By kicking a football, they will tee off from the same area as the traditional game and use the same fairways, but the hole length will be much shorter with specially-constructed greens in out-of-bounds areas.

David Croxton, joint owner of Cold Ashby Golf Club, said: "It's a halfway house between the two sports and something we thought would appeal to a broad range of people."

"It's not as precise a game as golf, but still requires a bit



of skill.

"We find that its those with footballing backgrounds that tend to be better at it."

As it would be extremely difficult to kick a football as far as striking a golf ball, the par three footgolf holes are only 50 yards long.

Par four holes are 150 yards long and par fives are between 200 and 250 yards long.

The holes are 21 inches in diameter and much deeper than golf holes.

Former Premier League referee, Northamptonshire resident Pete Walton, blew the starting whistle to get Footgolf under way with a competition for those present at an official launch last week.

And Mr Walton kicked a score of four-over par to finish in joint-first place.

Gareth May, of the UK Footgolf Association, said this was the 85th course to open in the UK, but the first in Northamptonshire, an area where he felt that the game would continue to grow in popularity.

He said: "It is becoming known as one of the fastest-growing sports in the country and I'm particularly impressed with the layout at Cold Ashby."

"It's a great variation of terrain and views."

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School comes out of special measures

A secondary school in Northampton has come out of special measures for the first time in two years after the principal took some "tough decisions" to raise standards.

Thomas Becket Catholic School, which has been rated 'inadequate' by Ofsted since March 2013, has moved up into the "requires improvement" category after a visit by inspectors in February.

The school, which is currently in the process of becoming an academy, is run by principal Yvonne Lucey, who took over in September 2013.

Mrs Lucey told the *Chron* last June that she believed the school may be rated "good" by the end of 2015 due to the rapid improvement since her arrival. The school has also established a close partnership with The Duston School, which is rated "outstanding" by Ofsted.

A report of an Ofsted vis-



Principal of Thomas Becket Catholic School, Yvonne Lucey

it from last month states the principal has taken "some tough decisions to raise standards since her arrival, and it is a school which continues to improve."

It states: "Students' movement around the school is orderly and they are polite and courteous towards each other, members of staff and visitors

to the school.

"Students' achievement is good in English. They are taught well in this subject, and this aspect of subject leadership is strong."

"Students' spiritual, moral, social and cultural development is a strong aspect of students' daily school life," it added.

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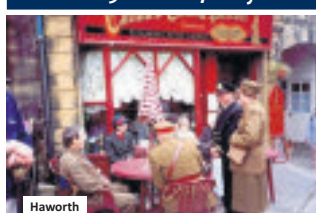
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£1million lost on empty homes

More than £1 million has been lost on empty council houses in less than a year, a Freedom of Information request has revealed.

According to figures up to February this year – week 46 of the financial year – Northampton Borough Council had lost out on £1,026,262.54 in void properties.

Broken down, the figures showed an average loss of £22,000 to £25,000 per week since last April. The request also revealed that almost the same total – £1,341,654 – was lost in tenants' rent arrears up to February.

But while the council documented 232 empty properties in February – the majority of which had been void for up to six months – at the same time there were 2,887 on the waiting list for housing.

Northampton council housing campaigner Norman Adams said: "The question I often ask myself is whether the borough council is making the best use of the housing stock they currently have."

"I don't think they are, as they have homes standing empty and at the same time pay to have people in temporary accommodation and living without a home."

"This seems very wrong, when some of the properties have been empty and people need to be asking why."

Northampton Partnership Homes, which is responsible for the maintenance of the council's housing stock, responded that the high number of void properties was due to "major" redevelopment projects.

A spokesman said: "Throughout the year we have

tenants moving into and out of properties, which does mean we are never at a point where all of our homes are being lived in."

"In the last year we have also been working on some major projects which has meant we have kept a number of properties empty. This has allowed us the time needed to consider all of the options available as we make thorough assessments of the work needed to plan the refurbishment or redevelopment these properties."

"We are taking the time needed to make the right decision that will have the biggest benefit to tenants and the local community."

"This is not a quick process and means these properties will show as empty, even if, at this point, they are not suitable or available to be let."

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Motors

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Update gives added appeal

Buyers of new cars are splitting, with some heading to the posh end of the street and others looking for a bargain.

That leaves any car maker in the middle of the road facing a bumpy time. In car makers' terms, you could say that car buyers look either for an Audi, and expect to pay for its fancy features, or for a Dacia, where its cheapness makes it look like solid worth.

Woe betide companies floating between deluxe and downmarket. Like Mazda.

The answer is obvious,

head upmarket by making your cars look and feel a bit classier, while adding touchy-feely features that will charm or delight a driver looking to spend a year or two in the company of a chosen car.

Mazda's CX-5 compact SUV was already well along the road to premium product placement. Now, midway through the car's life comes a refresh that brings new lights which look most distinctive.

Inside, the cabin is given a visual lift, principally with a new seven-inch touchscreen that includes radio with DAB,

a couple of USB ports and, on top models, a satellite navigation system.

Every new version of the CX-5 – priced from £22,295 for a 2.0 litre petrol, front-driver to £30,595 for the 2.2 litre diesel with auto gears, satellite navigation and all-wheel drive – gains height adjustment for the front passenger seat, and an electronic parking brake instead of the old DIY lever.

Things are unchanged under the bonnet, where most CX-5s sold in the UK will have a lower powered version of the two diesels on offer.



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NAV 2WD

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2002 £1,495 ono

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BMW 116i SE 05, 1.6, 112,000 miles, silver, petrol, 2005, MOT and June. Lady owner. Good condition. £3,200 Tel: 07810627014
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09/04/2015
Women seeking men

BETTER SHAPE UP Kind and honest Northampton female, 38, enjoys cosy nights in and the quiet life, would like to meet a genuine, reliable and witty male, for friendship first, then lasting love. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 156771

GOT WHAT IT TAKES? Professional, honest Rushden woman, 44, 5'2", dark hair, own home, enjoys the simple things, now seeking a trustworthy, helpful man, to share a loving and happy future together. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 148573

JOURNEY OF A LIFETIME Happy, laid-back Cliftonville female, 44, 5'3", dark hair, enjoys baking, home life, sport and more, would now like to meet a tall, handsome and kind-hearted man, to enjoy life with. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 134681

ETERNAL FLAME Fun, loving and professional Daventry female, 44, new to the area, enjoys nights out, country pubs, fitness and fine foods, searching for a fun-loving guy, for friendship and laughs. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 173488

SKIP A HEARTBEAT Warm-hearted, straight-forward Warwick female, 50, enjoys dining, walks and good company, would like to meet a smart, independent, honest man, to share the good life with. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 175022

SIGN OF THE TIMES Flexible and fun-loving Rugby lady, 50, enjoys nights out, socialising and more, would like to meet an honest, laid-back, fun gent, for good times, company and more in the future. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 154857

IN THE MOOD FOR ROMANCE Slim, caring and relaxed Northampton woman, 55, 5'5", enjoys eating out, theatre and travel, would like to meet a humorous, educated gent, similar age, to share interests and love. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 157445

THERE'S MORE TO TELL Attractive, outgoing Leicester lady, 56, sociable and fun, enjoys the theatre, sport and countryside, looking for a loving and honest man, for company, friendship and maybe more. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 151613 or send a text to 80361

KEY TO MY HEART Outgoing, fun and loving Kettering female, 56, widowed, beautiful, loves walks, pets, entertaining, cooking, music and song writing, seeking artistic and sociable man, to love. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 164550 or send a text to 80361

LOT OF LOVE FOR THE RIGHT PERSON Loving, honest, sincere, 56 year old Daventry female, short dark hair, green eyes, average build, 5'4", would like to meet a man who is honest and genuine, for a long-term relationship. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 178692

NO TIME TO LOVE Hard-working, non-smoking, divorced Northampton lady, 58, 5'7", likes travel, gardening, film, walks and more, simply seeking a caring, genuine, fun man, to share happy times with. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 151470 or send a text to 80361

IT'S TIME WE MET Cuddly, honest, witty Hemel woman, 60, 5'3", N/S, blonde, likes swimming, theatre and weekends away, seeking a humorous, reliable male, with similar interests, to share a happy life. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 153853 or send a text to 80361

MUSIC FOR YOUR EARS Kind, 62 year old Northampton female, smoker, musician, loves live music. Would like to meet a similar male, who loves music and likes to go out. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 187959 or send a text to 80361

LIKE THE SOUND OF ME? Loving, caring, creative, 62 year old Northampton female, 5'4", smoker, musician, enjoys gigs, would like to meet a like-minded male for company and days together. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 187568 or send a text to 80361

TAKE A SECOND LOOK Creative and endearing Brackley woman, 64, 5'3", widowed, petite, enjoys retired life, dining, walks and more, seeking a loyal man, for friendship and whatever life has to offer. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 173448

DANCE PARTNER WANTED Sincere and friendly, 65 year old Market Harborough female, would like to meet a male dance partner, enjoy Ballroom and Rock and Roll, to get to know and share happy times together. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 179624 or send a text to 80361

CHASING DREAMS Quite, polite and easygoing Blatchley female, 65, 5'4", with many interests in life, now would like to find a nice, caring chap, of similar age, for nice company and hopefully a future together. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 179624 or send a text to 80361

FIND HAPPINESS Attractive, cheerful, Olney female, 67, widow, petite, blonde, non-smoker, non-drinker, like dancing, Tai Chi, choir, nature, animals and dining out. Seeking a caring, genuine, fun, 60-70. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 186849

THE RIGHT BALANCE Kind, easygoing Northampton woman, 67, widowed, enjoys reading, dog walks and the occasional nights out, simply searching for a kind and honest man, for friendship and good company. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 156627

SHARE A SIMPLE LIFE Quiet, petite and sincere Corby lady, 68, dresses smart and loves to travel, would now like to meet a smart, decent gent, to share nights out, cosy times and lots of loving company. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 173244

ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT! Sincere, honest and easy-going, 69 year old Northampton lady, like theatre, art, holidays, days out and country drives. Would like to meet a genuine gentleman to get to know and share happy times. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 182186 or send a text to 80361

A BETTER TOMORROW Young-at-heart, genuine, 69 year old Northampton female, 5'5", slim, no ties, like nice clothes, nights in and out, meals out, theatre and art. Seeks a male for a long-term companionship. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 182809 or send a text to 80361

UPFRONT AND UPBEAT Kind-hearted and loving Rugby female, 74, keen cyclist, now searching for a fun, active dance partner, for modern ballroom and latin american classes. Any level of dancing is welcome. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 153151

DANCING IN THE MOONLIGHT Retired, bubbly Northampton lady, 74, keen cyclist, now searching for a fun, active dance partner, for modern ballroom and latin american classes. Any level of dancing is welcome. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 184088 or send a text to 80361

GREAT COMPANIONS Happy and hopeful, 75 year old Wellington male, 5'5", attractive, lots of interests, would like to meet a local, warm hearted, kind gentleman, to share a happy companionship. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 184955

THE STORY SO FAR Friendly, caring and youthful Rugby lady, 78, 5'10", enjoys walks, theatre, board games, days out and more, would like to meet a similar, tender gent, to share happy times with. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 166417

DATE NIGHT Thoughtful and kind, 40 year old Northampton male, 5'10", attractive, would like to meet a local lady, of a similar age for friendship, fun, dates and a possible romance. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 178404

BRIGHTEN MY LIFE Kind and trustworthy Kettering man, 42, 5'10", GSOH, likes music, dining, pubs and socialising, would like to meet a warm, friendly and honest woman, for company and great times. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 156434 or send a text to 80361

LOYAL & CARING Handsome, 54 year old male, 5'11", like rugby, wildlife, walks and swimming. Would like to meet a nice, pretty, brunette woman with the same interests. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 188068 or send a text to 80361

MISSING THAT SPECIAL SOMEONE Very laid back, Northampton male, 54, have great sense of humour, like nights out on the town, staying in with the right person. Seeking a nice female, for good company and happiness. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 184088 or send a text to 80361

MAKING THE MOST OF IT Kind-hearted, decent and loving Rugby man, 55, 5'5", medium build, enjoys meals out, movies, friends and family, would like to date with a talkative female, for good times and a great company. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 187937 or send a text to 80361

READY AND WAITING Fun-loving, honest, 57 year old Rugby male, 5'10", grey hair, like reading, cinema, walking, swimming and watching sports. Would like to meet a genuine, sincere lady for fun, friendship and dates. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 188079 or send a text to 80361

TRY SOMETHING NEW Romantic, honest and kind Market Harborough male, 58, N/S, enjoys weekends away, holidays in the sun, music, dancing and gardening, seeking a loving lady, to share the good times. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 171744 or send a text to 80361

TELL IT TO MY HEART Easygoing, fun and active Wellingborough male, 58, 6ft, enjoys socialising and the fun things in life, now searching for an honest black or asian lady, to share love and romance. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 187295 or send a text to 80361

DAYS OUT Friendly, kind and caring, 59 year old Kettering male, would like to meet a single, friendly lady for outings and companionship. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 188953 or send a text to 80361

WHEN TWO BECOME ONE Romantic, professional handsome Market Harborough male, 60, N/S, own home, car and business, seeks an open and loving female, to share friendship, fun and lasting happiness with. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 158935 or send a text to 80361

LOST THAT LOVING FEELING? Attractive, slim, solvent Northampton male, 61, enjoys film, music and more, with lots of love to give, simply seeking a caring, loving lady, for friendship, love and lasting romance. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 148942 or send a text to 80361

ARE YOU A MATCH? Genuine, 62 year old Kettering gentleman, like walking, dancing, countryside, photography and bowling. Would like to meet a nice, sociable, local lady, for days out, nights out and company. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 185316 or send a text to 80361

CLOSE TO HAPPINESS Young-at-heart, genuine, sincere, fun-loving, 62 year old Banbury male, love all the good things in life. Would love to meet an honest, down-to-earth woman for friendship, company and maybe more. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 187230 or send a text to 80361

LET'S MAKE A DATE Happy, talkative and convivial Market Harborough man, 63, would like a date with a lovely, idealistic woman, for fun times and happiness. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 181520 or send a text to 80361

SHARE ADVENTURES Kind, decent and sensible Northampton male, 65, would like to meet a loyal, open female, for friendship and maybe more. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 186876 or send a text to 80361

COULD IT BE YOU? Honest and reliable, 69 year old Northampton male, widower, non-smoker, easy to get on with, like countryside, seaside, music and sports. Would like to meet a lady to share interests with. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 185114 or send a text to 80361

THE LONG RUN Funny, amenable and adventurous Banbury man, 77, 5'7", grey hair, slim build and a non smoker, would like to find a considerate, instinctive lady, for love and an honest future together. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 174624 or send a text to 80361

LET ME MAKE YOU HAPPY! Tall, well-educated, honest, 77 year old Coventry male, non-smoker, like the theatre, music, food and wine, walking and travel to Greece, dog owner. Seeking a lady to share a happy future with. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 183665 or send a text to 80361

Women seeking women

THE WHOLE PACKAGE Warm-hearted and sincere Rugby female, 61, own home and car, searching for a loving woman, for friendship and perhaps more if possible. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 176474 or send a text to 80361

Men seeking men

CLICKED ON LOVE Friendly, honest and straight-forward Northampton male, 60, 5'8", usual interests, would like to meet a local, fun, outgoing male, for fun, friendship and maybe something special. Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 166971 or send a text to 80361

EVER LASTING Active, fit, fair-haired Rugby male, 65, 5'8", varied interests, searching for an outgoing, fun, decent-looking male, for good times and a little bit of TLC. Are you the one for me? Call 0906 403 0737 and enter box number 169983 or send a text to 80361

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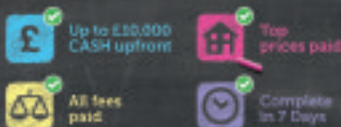
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SPORT

Boss Wilder rues 'rubbish start'

Cobblers' play-off hopes suffer setback with defeat to Cambridge

FOOTBALL

Boss Chris Wilder admitted a 'rubbish start' cost his Cobblers side dear as Cambridge United claimed three points at sun-drenched Sixfields on Easter Monday.

A first-minute Harrison Dunk effort secured a 1-0 victory for the U's, who had not won any of their previous seven Sky Bet League Two games.

Richard Money's men shut up shop and starved the Cobblers of meaningful opportunities as Wilder's men pushed for a breakthrough.

It means Cobblers are now five points adrift of the play-off places with just five games remaining.

And Wilder was left ruing a sluggish start as his men missed a chance to move closer to the top seven.

"It was a rubbish start and they were better than us, which gave them a massive lift," said the Town manager.

"You talk about teams being on a bad run and we stressed over the weekend that we couldn't afford to give them an opportunity to go ahead in the game and we have done.

"We committed too many people forward in the first minute, the goalkeeper should do better and it's given them a

massive boost. It gave them a lift, it deflated us."

Wilder made a change after just 30 minutes as he brought on Ivan Toney for winger Chris Hackett in a bid to kick-start a Cobblers charge.

But despite huffing and puffing, they couldn't blow the Cambridge door down.

"We decided to make the change because they were sat that deep and there was no room in behind," said Wilder.

"We had to move the ball in front of them and we weren't really doing it that well.

"We were always going to get caught on the counter-attack with the amount of people we were chucking forward and there were a couple of opportunities for them in the second half."

Joel Byrom said Cobblers simply weren't good enough and knows they have to be much better in Saturday's trip to Stevenage.

"Their two centre-halves headed everything and we didn't create a real gilt-edged chance, they were all half chances.

"We've got to be better than that. You've got to make your own luck and we didn't do that.

"It's been a tough Easter weekend, but the lads have given it everything, but we just fell short and it's not good enough."



BAD DAY Ryan Cresswell, Jason Taylor and Joel Byrom show their dismay following the Cobblers' 1-0 defeat to Cambridge

PICTURE: KIRSTY EDMONDS

Saints must up their game at Sandy Park

JIM Mallinder has issued a rallying call to his Saints players ahead of Sunday's trip to Sandy Park.

The director of rugby says his team were 'a long way behind' Clermont Auvergne in their 37-5 Champions Cup thrashing at Stade Marcel Michelin last Saturday.

And he knows his Aviva Premiership table-toppers

RUGBY UNION

must up their game if they are to get a positive result at Exeter Chiefs.

Saints, who are 10 points clear of second-placed Saracens, are closing in on securing a home play-off semi-final with just four games of the regular season to go.

And Mallinder said:

"We were a long way behind Clermont last weekend.

"It does help that they've got really passionate fans who do get behind the team and it's an awesome atmosphere out there.

"A lot of credit to their team, club and the whole town for supporting the way they do.

"But it's 15 against 15 and

on the day we weren't good enough.

"We need to improve this weekend."

Meanwhile, George Pisi admits his 100th appearance in Saints colours was a 'very humbling experience'.

Pisi brought up his ton in green, black and gold in Saturday's game at his former club Clermont Auvergne.

But it wasn't to be a happy return for the Samoan centre as Saints were smashed at Stade Marcel Michelin.

And Pisi admitted his team simply didn't perform in a one-sided Champions Cup quarter-final clash.

"It was good to come back but also quite difficult that we lost," he said.

"Clermont is a top team

and we're a top team as well, but we just didn't perform.

"It was a very humbling experience."

And on bringing up 100 Saints appearances, he said: "It's an honour to have played 100 games for Saints. Not many people play that many games here.

"I'm honoured to have had this opportunity at this club."